

REWRITE



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SELLING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

The job of writing and selling is a double one: writing and selling. The first task is lonely, but pleasant. The second is for the most part wearisome and, often, unrewarding in the extreme, pure drudgery. It requires that you keep records, do research and dig. It takes time from writing, which can be fun because it permits one to express himself & in a sense indulge himself, show off and be the whole show. Most writers spend more time on writing than in selling, really selling. Of course a few writers, who are vain & one book or one ms. writers, do only one or two pieces, and then spend the rest of their existence trying to persuade some editor that he is missing the bet of the century by not grabbing this masterpiece. But that is not a good example of salesmanship. It is simply making a pest of one's self.

I have the greatest respect for many writers, some of whom never hit the big, obvious markets that everyone knows about, and most of us try first. These humble, industrious, and resourceful writers dig up outlets that I have never heard of. At NCS House we have a market file that we try to keep reasonably up to date. It contains several thousand entries. And of course we have many lists that we can refer to. I also carry in my head an assortment of general knowledge gathered by reading and watching news columns of information that has developed and changed over a period of years. But even with these helps, and the flow of magazines that cross several desks, we know we do not know too much about markets. Special research always has to be done. And the writers I mentioned are always tipping us off about new markets.

No one, not even agents, perhaps least of all agents who specialize, can know "all" about markets. One reason for this is naturally because editors often do not know what they themselves think until a particular or unusual story comes along. I think of a serial about which I advised a writer once. It was a historical. The author was thinking of writing about a rather famous and often used character. I suggested she make a little boy the MC for greater reader interest. She did this, and her research was so thorough, the only thing the editor questioned was an actual happening that really occurred. Result: the editor accepted nearly 10,000 more words than she had stated emphatically in the beginning was her top length.

Incidentally, the author may well have overlooked a later bet, because she told only half the full historical story, an important anniversary of which was celebrated several years later. This made an almost perfect set-up for a sequel during the anniversary year. I have known lots of writers, including myself, to miss obvious follow up stories and set-ups such as this. It takes lots of wide experience to make one alert to openings.

The sale I have just described was one by the author without benefit of an agent. Now let us look at one arranged by an agent. The author had a series of short stories running in a very popular magazine. One of the biggest slicks allowed to the agent it would be interested in a similar series with suitable variations to make it an original project. A difficult assignment to say the least. Other writers, I believe, were given an opportunity to try out for this assignment. But the writer I am thinking of had a lead.

This opportunity represented a more difficult one than the series she was already engaged in for a variety of reasons. She had to avoid imitating herself. She had to create an entirely new character. One incidentally, that for reasons I cannot disclose at this moment, was much more difficult for her to visualize. All this called for particular care. The odds were all against her. And so she should have taken more care in presenting her samples. This was a case of where a great deal of painstaking effort was essential to read the mind and emotions of all of those known to have the final say in buying or rejecting not one story, but the "idea". Every possible rejection factor had to be eliminated. And the final decision had to be held off as long as possible. The chance to satisfy the editorial mind needed to be kept fluid as long as possible. It wasn't, and so the writer missed the boat. It was small satisfaction that no one else did succeed, and the whole idea was dropped.

But here is still another example. It was told me by the late Sam Merwin, once one of the highest paid short story writers in the business. His agent lunched with the editor of COLLIER'S one day. The latter remarked he would like to run some stories with theatrical backgrounds. One or two, maybe more, if they were good. The agent knew Merwin was a man who had been in and out of Broadway. He got in touch with Merwin immediately. Suggested he thought a series of four stories, independent but using some of the same people could be sold. Merwin turned the idea around in his mind. He fastened on an ironic bit of humor involving two producers at the moment in the public eye. He thus built the frame that gave the series topical news-peg interest and slight controversial value. He took extreme pains, and picked the editor's mind. Result: COLLIER'S bought eight of the yarns!

The secret of successful selling is being full of your subject, and enthusiastic about it. You have a product. You're sold on it & so overflowing with warmth & creative energy that much of your "stuff" never actually appears in the script. But this vitality does color it. Then you study intelligently your market. You do not slavishly imitate. On the contrary, you effect a worthy compromise between your stuff and the editor's needs. You are original inside his limitations. Try it.

REWRITE

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LET US ELECT THE BEST MEN!

It is time for a national election again. Time to elect tall men, statesmen. Time to take the long look, to balance purely local and often selfish interests against larger, national and international, well being. It's fashionable today to look down one's nose at internationalism, to believe that our own nation is the best of all, period, and that a deviation, any deviation, however small, from conformity to a tight line of jingoistic and nationalistic patriotism should be suspect.

Yet that is not the type of patriotism of a great American like President Eisenhower, who is a deeply religious man. Nor is it the spirit that made this country what it is today. Frenchmen, Poles, Jews, men of a varied number of races and creeds helped the 13 colonies to win their independence. It was this country's ability to appreciate and assimilate the best in every country that has given us our present vitality and resourcefulness. It is our friendly sense of neighborliness and willingness to share our prosperity with less fortunate or less mature & stabilized nations that keeps us friends in every part of the globe. They know that come a sudden and unexpected disaster, America is certain to be the first to lend them a hand in rebuilding. That we can and do thrill at every opportunity to work ably with others.

Are we then to step out of character, and belie our true nature by craven fear? Shall we, even as we fight thought-control by outsiders, weave our own spider's web of doom? Shall we fall into the very trap of Communist Russia by bankrupting ourselves in multi-faceted arms' races from which there can be no ultimate victory? Brute strength is a vital factor when one fights with an uncivilized and primitive bully armed with those weapons that civilization has devised. But there are many other ways to defeat such an enemy besides force alone. We must use all.

There is the overpowering strength one nation gains, when it earns the respect & admiration of the entire world. The one thing a bully fears more than anything else is to be on one side alone against a united front. And so far we have hardly scraped the surface in using moral indignation as a defense against the Iron Curtain countries. We have tried toicker and make deals. There never can be any compromise with evil, especially when a villain's word is backed only by flim-flam, & a treachery such as the world has never experienced before.

However practical and realistic one may be today, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the future of our civilization depends as much, if not more, upon belief in God as upon brutalizing force. The faith and transcendent love that sustained Jesus must fill and overpower all of us to the same wonderful degree that it seems to that exceedingly small sect known as Friends or Quakers... While others wave fists and threaten hostile neighbors, they go about living creatively, giving generously of their love that has no limiting drawstrings on it, and proving that men can live at peace with their neighbors!

And so we face another major election year with all of its opportunities and responsibilities. As I write this the President has not declared himself. But although he represents to a large percentage of the country, I think, the kind of personality we believe this country typifies, the question whether he runs or not is not nearly so important as it has been made to seem. The important and vital thing is that all over America we, the people, elect good men, tall statesmen, the best, most honest men we can for every major and minor office. That would be the best compliment we could possibly pay "Ike," our good neighbor. That and a clean, honest election.

There are exceptionally good men in both of the major political parties, and also probably in most of the smaller parties. But we have got to find and elect them. The sooner we learn to maintain party loyalty, but subordinate it in the final analysis to really patriotic love of our great country, the better will we play our hand for enduring peace and good will. Nothing will so impress Russia and the world at large so much as an honest, uncorrupt and wise choice of good men.

REWRITE

YOU CANNOT GET AWAY FROM MORAL VALUES

You may be writing an article or a story, but in either case moral values will play a very important part in your plans. You may think you are offering pure entertainment & nothing more. But those values still remain all important. Take the good old "Westerns" for example. Who were and are the opponents that fight it out? On one side the rustlers or horse thieves, on the other the hero and the forces of law and order. Today, despite the over-emphasis on violence and crime, the movies, radio and tv are basically still in the childish age of playing "cops and robbers."

Although it is not good reporting if a reporter editorializes. He is supposed to report the facts, and let the reader draw his own conclusions. But much of the interest & excitement of our daily newspapers and magazines derives from the authors and editors emphasizing the good and the evil forces at work in the community. A war of the positive and the negative. In politics there is usually the struggle between the "haves" & the have nots. Ever since Adam and Eve there is the struggle between materialism and idealism. Most of the strongest themes for dramatic stories or outstanding feature articles grow out of the clash of these opposites.

Every time I study a story I look for the two extremes the author has set up. And it seems to me that the most valuable image in my work that I ever stumbled upon was one I call for myself the prism of drama and dramatic conflict. Granted that you have two opposing forces or values, then the MC and the reader face two alternatives. Now Change or the lack of it can be equally dramatic. But in a scene or a story alike the movement of the action from one extreme to the other is not effected all at once.

That is where your prism comes in. In the complete cycle of a rainbow you move a step at a time from purple to red to orange to yellow to green to blue to purple. Red, yellow, blue are the primary colors. The others are derivatives, blends achieved by mixing yellow and blue, blue and red, etc. But between purple and red or yellow and green there are many other gradations, just as all the colors are gradations between black and white.

It is the same with emotions and the moral values. Actors like scenes that "run the complete gamut" between two wide extremes. A scene that permits an actor to run up & down the graduated scale between love and hate—how he loves it. And the writer who can devise a scene like that between Camille & Armand's father in "Camille," the old dramatic melodrama, has accomplished something. In that scene the father says, "Camille, I like you. But, you a prostitute, cannot marry my son." Camille disagrees, begs, wheedles and threatens. All in vain. It may be melodrama

and a tear-jerker, but it will act well. It is a classic of scene-construction.

And it succeeds because it goes one great step further. Its author shows convincingly at least while you are in the theater, that black may have some white in it, and white, correspondingly, may have some black, too.. In other words, that truth is relative, not arbitrary and fixed. The modern members of a group of writers such as The Western Writers of America are well aware that their predecessors wrote over-simplified horse operas. The hero and heroine were spun-gold, while, on the contrary the villain was a wretch, a black-hearted devil.

Today, we try to be more subtle. But actually, much of the difference between literary writing and entertainment writing is the difference between adolescence and maturity in thought and emotions. And the great literary names down through the ages are those of men and women, who had the insight & the observant eye to see more deeply. They didn't content themselves with just two extremes. I think rather they set up the extremes, the opposites, but then they showed the way the moral values have a way of criss-crossing & becoming mixed.

Galsworthy did this in his grim, ironical play, "Justice." Shakespeare did it better, most people will agree, in "The Merchant of Venice." Notable playwrights and novelists, in all ages, have been called the conscience of the nation or the world. Many of them today are trying to wrestle with the pressing problems of our age. Segregation, capital & labor, hungry, down-trodden people, materialism vs. the human spirit. Many of the serious books and articles concern them, too. A writer today has no need of running out of ideas. Only of figuring out how to reduce an important theme to simple, yet real terms.

That is where another factor enters in. A great many stories today are in a sense allegories. If you have worked out a scale of values, you can make your characters represent certain of these. Don't make the villain all black and the hero white as snow. Instead, let them represent mature expressions of the opposing or contrasting ideas and emotions. And don't just paint with black or white. Use all the gradations of color. Let the subordinate and minor characters help to carry the ball. That way you will build up a complete and realistic situation. Each character represents a different shading in the scale of moral values.

But remember when you come to write those scenes, to build them up, milk them dry. Get all the changes and transitions in the slow, inevitable movement of the action, the shift in the MC's position from "I want to do this" to "I must do this." And don't be too hasty. Remember Camille. Get all the "turns." Tease the reader. Screw up the suspense—tight!

REWRITE

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POET'S WORKSHOP

This month the poem for comment is:

WHIP-POOR-WILL

By Gwynedd Griffith

Airy spirit of the night,
I have heard your restless flight,
What your quest? Why your cry
Lonely on the midnight sky?
Echoing...fading...faraway...
Has your dear love flown astray?
What the dream that guides your flight?
Airy spirit of the night...

Miss Griffith says: "Whip-poor-will" was the result of an early memory of the lonely because solitary life of an only child living in the country—the plaintive cry of the lonely bird on the midnight sky, a cry that filled me with wondering restlessness, and an awareness of my own then lonely state."

Many comments were received concerning our workshop. It's easier to take criticism, as we all know, if the compliments come first:

E. P. Chichester: One senses the darkness and isolation. It has a simple theme, and is treated simply. Shows unity of thought.

Eunice C. Neely: Its rhythm is smooth, not monotonous. One gets the idea of a haunting, plaintive melody.

Julia Anna Cook: An example of "poetry for pleasure." Refreshing.

Katherine L. Ramsdell: Recreates in simple, telling phrases the memory of her childhood loneliness.

Lily D. Pearce: The weirdness of the bird's cry is so well brought out.

Bessie Berg: A delicate, musical imagery.

Madeline G. Salmon: Contains singable, melodious words.

Mary A. Fallon: The words chosen carry out the impression of the lonely, restless, seeking spirit of the whippoorwill very well.

There were more, but space is tight. For the same reason we cannot use all the helpful comments that came in. I choose representative ones. The author gets all of them.

The title:

Nan Fitz-Patrick: While I like it written with hyphens, my dictionary says it is one

word, though some authorities disagree.

Bessie H. Hartling: I like it. It tells the subject and recalls the sound. The body of poem justifies the title.

Geraldine M. Tolles: I would like to see it mentioned early in the poem to quickly center the reader's attention on the whippoorwill.

Olive Boynton: Without it, I should not be sure what bird the poem refers to. The tempo and meter seem almost too light, too gay too swift, to convey to the reader the haunting, almost weird mystery of the bird's nature. I can see that Gwynedd Griffith has the talent and skill to write an unmistakably whippoorwill poem.

Elva: A good suggestion—to make the poem so unmistakably about a whippoorwill that the title need but verify the fact. I think that is what Mrs. Tolles is saying. If the poem were more definitely about a whippoorwill, we would not need to repeat the word in the body of the poem.

To begin carrying out Miss Boynton's suggestion, let us take a look at the facts of nature.

Mary S. Thomas: Airy spirit suggests something small, light, ethereal. Actually, the whippoorwill's body is ten inches long, but seems much larger because of long wings and a wide wing spread, chunky build about head and breast, and a large beak. The whippoorwill never sings on the wing and his flight, though swift and agile, is silent. The bird is so seldom seen that it often seems but a wandering voice. Might not the poem be better built around this image?

Gertrude Durand: Airy spirit hardly applies to the whippoorwill, which is almost earth-bound—lays its eggs on the ground, perches on fences, seldom gets higher than the lower branches of trees. Its flight, restless enough as its darts about in search of food, is noiseless. Wouldn't "felt your restless flight" be better?

Mary Alden Campbell: Instead of picturing the bird as flying, the poet should tell us that he is hidden, not restless, not questing, only calling incessantly. (390 consecutive calls have been recorded!)

Olive Boynton: Airy spirit...Not the whippoorwill. He is rather a solemn bird. Even when he steps up his tempo it is urgency rather than gaiety he expresses. "Eerie" would be more definitive.

Mary A. Fallon agrees with Gertrude Durand, that the flight is restless.

"Midnight sky" was questioned by readers, since the whippoorwill flies low, and only

REWRITE

sings that late on moonlit nights.

Geraldine M. Tolles: Children, even lonely ones, are usually asleep before midnight.

Rhyme and Rhythm:

E. P. Chichester: The rhyme scheme does not seem varied enough. While the repetition of the first line for the last makes for emphasis, and is allowable, I object to the same word "flight" in the secondary rhyming lines 2 and 7. Either one or the other should introduce another rhyming word. Lines 3 and 4 use the same long "i" sound as the first two and last two lines. This is monotonous in so short a poem. There are only 2 vowel sounds in the rhymes of eight lines! The interior rhyme "why-cry" is displeasing. Can you use, "call" for "cry"?

Eunice C. Neely: The cry of the whippoorwill is certainly repetitious, consequently the frequent use of the long "i" sound isn't objectional to me.

Mary Alden Campbell: Some editors wouldn't allow the sound of "quest" after "rest"less, or "midnight" after "night", or "airy" with "spirit". Perhaps using "whippoorwill" for a rhyme word and choosing a title that developed the real theme of the poem would help a lot.

Madeline G. Salmon: The regular meter, the smooth lines, the rhymes and the repetition in the first and last lines, give the whole poem a singing quality.

Jac Tweton: I think a new, dissimilar last line would add to the feeling, and descriptive powers of the poem.

Nan Fitz-Patrick: I like the last line repeating the first as, in such a short poem, this gives it stability and form.

Mary A. Fallon: The rhythm fits the spirit of the whippoorwill, especially the variations of the questioning in line 3, and again in line 5. The pause in each of these lines where a syllable is omitted, gives the effect of variety in keeping with the words expressed. The falling stress that the trochee gives further carries out the spirit of the poem, and even the call of the whippoorwill, the way he stresses WHIPpoorwill.

E. P. Chichester: Line 3 is short a syllable. Try reading it "what the question?" instead of "quest". Sounds smoother to me.

The questions:

Mary S. Thomas: Most of the questions seem a bit academic. Should not the idea of loneliness be better conveyed by playing up such ideas as that of the bird's being heard only in the gloaming, of a person's sudden waking to hear it in the distance on a moon-lit

night, or its indistinct appearance, its excessive shyness, its swift, silent retreat when anyone tries to approach it, its haunting whistle?

Mary Alden Campbell: Perhaps these 4 questions should have a compensating answer showing how a lonely bird-cry affects the child; perhaps not—there is an empathy created by the poem's drifting off in the three dots.

Geraldine M. Tolles: It seems as though for smoothness sake she should have said, "what is your quest? why do you cry?" The same is true of "what the dream..."

Nan Fitz-Patrick: There are too many questions for such a small poem and this tends to lessen response by the reader and undermine his confidence in the writer's conviction.

Mary A. Fallon: I like the questioning attitude of the lines. I think anyone who listens to the whippoorwill can't help wondering about his plaintive repetition of those same notes over and over.

Line 5:

Eunice C. Neely: I suggest writing "faraway" as two words. It would really make one feel the distance and the flight.

Mary S. Thomas: The best line for suggesting the mood the writer is trying to convey. Characteristic, too, of the bird's call.

Clive Boynton: Lovely and peculiarly "whippoorwill" in sound, sense, and feeling.

Julia Anna Cook: So effective it would be a shame to change it.

Line 6:

Clive Boynton: "dear love" strikes a sentimental note. There is no nonsense about the whippoorwill. He has sentiment but not sentimentality. The phrase has a too old fashioned sound in this setting.

Madeline G. Salmon: Might it not be better to ask the bird what knowledge or assurance or love he is seeking in the night?

Nan Fitz-Patrick: An intruding over-sentimental query, breaking off the impact of the preceding lines. (She suggests:) Like human dreams that go astray.

Mary S. Thomas: I don't like "flown astray," possibly because "astray" has been so commonly associated with animals.

Gertrude Durand: "flown astray" seems a little awkward. I prefer "gone astray," though trite, as smoother.

Line 7:

REWRITE

E. P. Chichester: Does a bird dream? Can a dream guide motion? Isn't the whole idea one that applies human attributes to a non-human being?

Olive Boynton: A dream may impel, inspire, but doesn't guide his flight. This line (provided the slight change of meter is acceptable) impresses me as more clearly conveying the meaning: "What dream inspires your mystic flight?"

Bessie H. Hartling: A better word for dream such as "urge".

Punctuation:

Mary S. Thomas: To clarify the syntax, put a period at the end of line 2, move the interrogation point from line 4 to the end of 5, putting a comma after 4. In exactly the same way, move the interrogation point from line 7 to 8, putting a comma after 7.

More ideas:

Carrie Marecy Boring suggests reversing the fourth and fifth lines. Then "echoing...." would follow right after the word cry. She thinks it should. In order to do this while keeping a pattern, she would rearrange this poem into a couplet, a quatrain, a couplet.

Mary S. Thomas: Might not the whippoorwill be more explicitly used in the last line or two as a symbol of human loneliness? This would create a climax, and if done skillfully, might give the last line an interesting twist.

Geraldine M. Tolles: Miss Griffith's statement in the paragraph under her poem, might well be worked into a second part of the poem. Picturing in poetry the lonely child listening to the poignant call of the whippoorwill in the dark, and her emotional reaction to it would give body and depth to the poem, and greater meaning for the reader.

Markets suggested were: NATURE, farm, home magazines, poetry journals, newspapers.

Elva: We must remember that there is more to this poem than a description of the whippoorwill. We must not forget the child. The poet is not describing the way the bird sounds—but the way the bird sounds to lonely little child. The whippoorwill may not be restless in fact, but may, indeed, seem restless to a child who is also restless, and it's this feeling, if brought out in the poem, that is sure to make it really a poem, not just a melodious description of a bird. The reactions and feelings of the child are most important. However, I do not agree with the suggestion that another stanza be added to picture the child. We should be able to feel the child is there, because we are seeing the whippoorwill through her eyes, and our sight is being colored by her impression.

Someone suggested using "whippoorwill" for a rhyme word. This might be a good idea, but we do not really need to have the word anywhere in the body of the poem, if as Olive Boynton says, it is a really whippoorwill poem. The choice of words and rhythms could remind us so unmistakably of a whippoorwill, we need not use the word at all. Many poems have been written about whippoorwills, using the name to set the rhythmic base. More originality can be achieved by doing the same without using the name.

We are getting too technical when we say a dream cannot guide a flight. Too literal. We should be accurate, but let us not take all the imagination out of poetry. In a sense inspiration is a guiding spirit, and it is in this sense that I think the author uses the word. But a better word might be found, such as Bessie Hartling's "urge". My suggestion is "need."

Personally, I enjoy the repetition of the first line again at the end of the poem. It ties the poem up, adds to the singing quality. In a letter from Witter Bynner, author of "Book of Lyrics" reviewed in REWRITE for December, he says: ".....Music has slipped out of modern poetry." Let us not let the music of poetry get away from us.

I don't agree with the person who did not like the repetition of "flight." Since it is used with a different combination of words, it is good. It adds to the music of the refrain, yet is not mere repetition. It builds. However, flight might not be the best word. Since the whippoorwill sits so long in one place we do not feel that he is flying from one spot to another, rather moving at intervals. Miss Durand's suggestion to use "felt" instead of "heard" is good.

Concerning "sky", though the bird may be low his call would seem to fill the sky to a lonely listening child. Perhaps this could be better expressed by using "against" or "fill".

I did not object to the internal rhyme in "Why your cry". In a way it is indicative of the whippoorwill's call, merely changing the short "i" sound in the beginning and end to the long "i" sound, a variation that will help to keep the poem from becoming too much a caricature of the whippoorwill's cry. The repetition of the same long "i" sound throughout, "quest" and "restless", and the presence of only two rhyme sounds is good in this poem. Is not the call of the whippoorwill monotonous? In eight short lines such repetition cannot become so monotonous that it bothers. Rather it puts over the spirit of the lonely repeated cry of the whippoorwill.

I don't think there are too many questions for a short poem. The mind of the child is filled with questions, and the fact that they are unanswered helps to put over the lonely, restless feeling of the child,—the need of

the child.

Mary Fallon is right when she points out a good variation of meter in line 3. While poetry should be written in good grammar just as should prose, in this case the omission of the verb is so evident that no one could mistake what the poet means. The danger in ignoring the rules of grammar lies in the fact that so often the result is sloppy, ambiguous writing. There is no ambiguity here. In addition the poet is conveying something in the way of feeling to us through the rhythm. She has broken a rule for an artistic reason. She has accomplished more by leaving out the verb. Therefore she is justified. Perhaps she could use this same meter again in another line, perhaps not. If she does it too often, the poem will degenerate into just an imitation of the bird's call and would lose some of the lonely restless feeling she is trying to put over.

While I always have the last word in this workshop, there is nothing final about it.. There are no directions, in black and white, for writing poetry. Many shades of gray are acceptable and desirable. There are many different editors to please, many different audiences. It remains for the poet to sort out these comments and decide for herself which she should incorporate into a revision. Or, failing the ability to revise successfully, (it's difficult to do without losing the original spark) perhaps she has learned another principle to apply to future poems.

Next time we discuss a child's poem:

JOHNNY-JUMP-UPS

By Eunice C. NEELY

Johnny-jump-ups' saucy faces
Peer from unexpected places;
They are in the rockery, in the bed,
In the pathway where we tread;
They scatter seed right in the grass
To smile at people as they pass.
Pert little faces, full of fun,
Flirting with rain and winking at sun
Are tempting me; I want to play,
But I must cut the grass today!

This poem has been rewritten several times. It was sent out once to FORWARD but was returned with a "does not fit our editorial requirements" rejection slip. Mrs. Neely has written several poems for children, most of which she contributed to the school paper where she taught. In 1952 she won first prize for a poem at the Philadelphia Regional Writers' Conference.

Deadline for comments is May 1st. Thank you for sending your comments in such readable fashion: different ideas separated, and the whole double-spaced. It helps a lot because then I can catalogue the many different types of comment and separate them.

Please send humorous poems with a comment about Mrs. Neely's poem, because in September Workshop we will discuss humorous verse. The shorter your poems are the better. This time we plan to buy (at a token payment, \$1 each) and use more than one in the September issue.

Poems to be eligible must be accompanied, always by a comment on the other fellow's. Whether you enter a poem or not, be helpful and send a comment anyway. Do not forget to say what you like about Mrs. Neely's poem & why. And remember, deadline, May 1st. (Comments received late will be forwarded to an author always.) Madeline Salmon sends thank you for the helpful suggestions on her poem "Identity".

NEW BOOKS FOR POETS

THIS TILTING DUST. Leah Bodine Drake. The Golden Quill Press. \$2.00. A selection of the Book Club for Poetry. It won the Borestone Mountain Poetry Award for \$1,250. Miss Drake is a very good craftsman and has much to say. One could only wish she would say it with a little more warmth.

THIS, MY BEQUEST. Willis Eberman. The Golden Quill Press. \$2.50. Another Book Club for Poetry selection. Good poetry to sample little at a time. The volume is permeated with storm and death, which makes for gloominess in reading if taken at one sitting.

ADD: BATTING AVERAGE COLUMN.

Marjorie S. Scheuer

Poems: Washington STAR, C. S. MONITOR.

Lydia Lion Roberts

Articles: Boston GLOBE, C. S. MONITOR.

Helen S. Neel

Articles: NATIONAL REPUBLIC, FORECAST
and WESTERN PRODUCER, FAMILY HERALD.

NOTE: send in your list of acceptance, if possible, please be specific as to dates or issues. And we welcome names of editors and addresses. Your cooperation helps us to offer a wider and more accurate knowledge regarding markets that are receptive.

Boston Arts Festival. Good news for poets. Now in its third year, this chamber of commerce dream for attracting "visitors to the Boston Public Gardens" in June, now gives to a contemporary American poet a cash award of \$500 for a new work on the occasion of this festival. Archibald MacLeish is the recipient this year. Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg preceded him.

Investigation or White Wash? Will the corrupt lobbying in the Senate and elsewhere be bared and curbed, or covered up? The United States have a historic opportunity to get a cleaner government. Will we insist upon it?

REWRITE

2ND CLARK UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

Plans are now well under way for the Second Clark University Writers' Conference in Worcester, Mass., July 12-14th. It will be a good one, we are beginning to think, judging by the staff that is being assembled by Bill. And as early as January the first inquiry had already been received! A number of others have come in since then. I hope that the registration will be larger, but not too much larger than last year. Because the nice thing last year was the intimate, friendly, and helpful atmosphere.

This year we hope to improve the schedule we drew up last year quite a bit. It is also our intention to make it possible for everyone to hear more of the speakers. There will be fewer simultaneous workshops. Most of our staff are nationally known editors & writers in their special fields. The others if less well known, are no less expert. Our feeling is that they should be heard by all or most of the conferees. In a conference of this kind there are values in getting the round viewpoint and discovering that the universal and fundamental principles are very much the same in all types of writing.

As we go to press we seem assured that an associate editor of READER'S DIGEST, Edward H. Schmidt, who also teaches at NYU Writing Center, and Maxine Lewis, fiction editor of THE FAMILY CIRCLE and author of an excellent book on writing, "The Magic Key to Successful Writing," will be on our staff. Frances Frost, widely published poet, is also signed to come. We hope to have Mildred Mikkonen, one of Bill's former students, and Worcester TELEGRAM's Women's News Editor, who is also a featured Sunday columnist. Doris Marston, editor of the Maine State Federation of Women's Clubs Magazine, one of last year's very popular speakers, is expected to return.

On the fiction side another distinguished member of the staff will be Theodore Sturgeon, fiction writer and author in the Science Fiction field. Allene Corliss, who heard him speak at a Canadian conference, was praising him highly last year. There will be others, including, we hope, an agent and a juvenile writer. And we have a very helpful tape recording of Allene. Station WTAC used it simultaneously while she led a workshop! Wow!

The Eastern Regional Christian Writers' Conference, Mrs. John E. Thomas, Grace Congregational Church, Union Ave. at Pearl Street, Framingham, Mass., will be held in Boston on Saturday, Apr. 14th. For details: address as above. (All day, good program & speakers.)

9th Annual Christian Writers' and Editors' Conference, Green Lake, Wis., July 7-14, and 14-21st, will be a big and interesting one. Details: address as above, Miss Helen K. Wallace, 1703 Chest St., Phila. 3, Pa.

16TH STATE OF MAINE WRITERS' CONFERENCE

A preliminary announcement from Den Kelly makes this Conference sound interesting. It will be held in Ocean Park, August 22-24th. Robb Sagendorph, publisher and editor, YANKEE and "The Old Farmer's Almanac," will be a featured speaker. The Kellys, the Glessons, the Herrises, Doris Marston, Loring Williams and Sheldon Christian all expect to be back with new names added to the staff. Den says Duane Doolittle, editor of DOWNEAST says he really hopes to attend this year.

It is an informal conference and much fun is had because so many of the same writers, artists and editors return each year, picking up on the experience yarns and practical shoptalk where they left off the year before. The nearby beach and ocean, the friendly atmosphere of the little hotel and the reunion dinner on the first night all make it an unforgettable experience. For further details write: Den Kelly, 37 Stone St., Augusta, Me. For accommodations: Ocean Park Hotel, Ocean Park, Me. (The very nominal registration of the Conference and the inexpensive rates at the hotel make this an exceedingly attractive short conference.)

THE PHILA. REGIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE

This will be the 8th annual conference. A very large number of workshops, lectures, & opportunities to talk with prominent writers and editors, an agent or two, etc. are packed into the short time. It is one of the best run conferences in the country. A board of managers starts the week after each conference to plan the next one and meets throughout the year.

This year the Conference comes later than usual. June 27-29, Hotel Bellevue-Stratford. Because of its relation to Phila. and N. Y. publishing centers the staff is always noteworthy. And this year for the third year in succession Bill Harris is serving as special Conference Consultant. He is available to members of the Conference for personal conferences about writing and selling problems. He always looks forward to seeing members of the WCS Family who may be in the area.

The Conference as usual is staging a contest open to all who register for any workshop. There are categories with word limits, 12 of them, which should be enough for most writers! Entries due by June 1st. (Postmark deadline.) Address: PHWC, Box 897, Phila. 5, Pa., for complete rules.

Raise in Postal Rates Threatened. Once again Congress is being asked to raise postal rates, including first class. Not likely in an election year. But a raise will not do much to lessen the postal deficit. The postal employees, under-paid, want another raise and point out that the last Congress raised them \$4 per week, and its members \$150.00!

REWRITE

SOME IMPORTANT NEWS AND VIEWS

The Western Writers of America third annual anthology has not only been received well by critics in its hard cover edition issued by Random House, but is to be reprinted (by Dell Books) in the spring of 1957.

REWRITE is glad to give the WWA a generous amount of credit for the way it and its members are attempting to rehabilitate the reputation of the so-called "Western." These writers feel, quite correctly, that stories with a Western background need not be a combination of six gun "bang-bang" and a caricature dialect such as never existed on sea or land. They apparently feel that the Western is an outgrowth of the settling of the West and thus its developing folklore, a true segment of Americana. In other words, a genuine prototype of the romance and drama of American life. As such, they would like over a period of years to make it a worthy cousin to the more serious books in fiction and factual prose about the West. Incidentally, not all books written by the members of WWA are fiction. Nor all magazine short pieces.

The lesson of this is that a well organized group of writers in a special field, any field, can lift the level of their writing, can improve the conditions of their selling considerably. The Mystery Writers of America and the Society of Magazine Writers both are achieving practical results, too. In an appreciable way all three organizations are opening the way for more and better writing by innumerable writers, many of whom aren't now members of their organizations. We feel this is good for Writing, and in the longrun what is good for Writing is best for all of us who write. It makes better craftsmen and it makes better, happier, more prosperous & finer citizens of each and every one. There are no worthier folk in any land than writers who are creative and proud of their good craftsmanship and high standards.

The Harvard Summer School is planning for its overall program this summer a conference on "The Little Magazine in America." It is to cover such magazines as the Kenyon Review, Sewanee Review and Partisan Review. It will also take in "some of the poetry journals... (that have become) such a distinctive feature of American life and letters." It is to

Manager, Hotel & Travel Dept., Boston HERALD-TRAVELER, 8 Mason St., Boston 12, Mass., pays each Sunday \$10 for a 1,000 words resume of your trip. Probably limited to readers within the circulation area. Rules are detailed. Read them before submitting!

AMERICAN WEAVE, 4109 Bushnell Road, University Heights 18, Ohio. This is a new address for this well edited poetry magazine, published by Loring Williams, our friend and staff associate at innumerable writers' conferences for many years.

be hoped that the discussion will not be limited to the scholarly and literary publications. A thorough and painstaking study and analysis of the problems confronting Little magazines could be an extremely healthy aid to their strengthening for the future. This would in turn be beneficial to writers, and would no doubt lead to better writing, & to more fruitful creative work. The Conference would thus leave a lasting influence on the writing and editing in these small periodicals. And that would be good for everyone.

The Book Review Digest published by H. W. Wilson Co. has for the first time included a review of selected Western novels. That is a healthy sign.

VARIETY, the magazine of Show Business recently editorialized that fiction is staging a come-back, as REWRITE has persistently averred it would. Robert J. Landry explained it this way: "Not lost upon the publishers and editors is the complete dominance of fiction in the popularity of both theater film and television programs." He pointed out an effort on the part of magazines to become a sort of useful service magazine of information and controversy has failed because the element of entertainment, the most potent of all appeals, was forgotten. (The hucksters, who clutter radio and television with advertising messages often disguised as entertainment, would soon disappear if they overlooked the powerful appeal of their entertainer talent and the dramatic material they use.)

The wise writer tries to keep abreast and be in tune with the spot requirements of editors. But even more he studies the deep, eternal and universal appeals for writers. If fiction suffers a momentary regression, and if a new medium such as tv arrives, he does not go into a tizzy, and try to master this in preference to fiction as such. Quite the contrary. He continues to keep his eye on an audience he thinks he can write for. He continues to learn about people and to perfect his own craftsmanship. That's what matters!

Writers' Magazine. In its November issue one of these publications ran a disparaging article about Little magazines. The whole tone was uncomplimentary and in particular, the author misrepresented and maligned several of the oldest verse magazines. Others including REWRITE, were inaccurately reported.

In a subsequent issue the editor published a grudging apology, and promised a re-evaluation later. The article was definitely in error. We believe its tone speaks for itself and no further comment is required for our many readers who wrote in indignantly about it.

The Canadian Authors' Association, Phyllis Blakeley, 88 Connaught Ave., Halifax, N. S., is holding its Convention there June 25-28.

REWRITE

"IN CLARITY AND TRUTH IS YOUR STRENGTH"

Have you ever interviewed someone who did not want to talk? I will never forget an early interview I did with a businessman, who was afraid he would be giving away his trade secrets to his competitors. It took me over 2 hours to persuade him even to grant me this interview. Then, although it was an exceedingly technical subject, I did not dare use a notebook.

This matter is one that every interviewer, every reporter and feature writer is certain to face sooner or later. Even editors & public relations people meet up with it. Perhaps the most dramatic occasion of all in recent history occurred when Jim Hagerty, the President's press secretary, had to come to a quick decision as to how he would tell reporters about the heart attack. He faced at that point the question of whether to "take the public into his confidence" or to offer the classic evasion, "no comment." It is at that moment of decision that many businessmen, important executives and government officials make the most important mistake any person or institution in the news can make.

People who have to give out statements, & writers charged with getting them, would do well to read and preserve for future reference the article, "Why I Told the Truth About Ike's Illness" in THIS WEEK, Jan. 16th of this year. It's an interview of Hagerty by Merriman Smith, one of the veteran reporters who covered the President in Denver. In the two-way conversation some of the principles of news and good public relations are definitely brought out.

Smith started the ball rolling by showing that in the cases of Wilson, Harding & Roosevelt evasion was practiced and the truth in each instance was withheld. But with Eisenhower it was not. Jim Hagerty, probably one of the greatest press secretaries, has confided that from the time he took office the President told him to "play it straight," a method most Americans thoroughly approve. A "straight story," as Ike is reported to have urged even while he was in an oxygen tent, is always the best story to present to the public whose trust and confidence you wish and need to retain.

Hagerty twice underscored this fact. When he began he commented: "In politics there is a widespread belief that it is sometimes the smart thing not to tell the truth." Again & again I have seen businessmen, schools & all sorts of people and organizations muff good opportunities to tell their story, or try to evade and hide behind a wall of silence, at times when events make them newsworthy. Yet ironically, when they have a story they wish to be publicized, they will go to the greatest lengths to get a free story, or bring a lobby-like pressure on editors to treat the story that is not good news. They exert unethical power to create & kill stories.

The good writer, whether he be a reporter or feature writer, or fictionalist, must be alert to this danger. In order to get a story and to protect his paper or magazine, an author must understand his place, the meaning of news in relation to life, and so what to say to obdurate and reluctant interviewees. Too often, reporters are merely legmen, charged with bringing home the facts. They are caught between two great forces, powerful news media that are determined to get the news and get it first, and equally powerful political, economic or cultural units which are determined to present the special false face before the public that they deem best, and most expedient to suit their purposes. I well remember when I stacked up against the cold, impersonal prejudice of an ancient and famous educational institution that did not like reporters and would have none of these nuisances around except when "they" wanted one of their ready-made news releases blown up, and given wide coverage.

Jim Hagerty has eloquently stated the essential principle:

THEORY

HAGERTY: There's nothing mysterious or clever about telling the truth. It is the greatest insurance policy ever invented, particularly in politics. A man in government, politics or any field of human relations who tries to lie out of a situation is bound to be found out sooner or later and seriously damaged, if not destroyed.

And, another thing, you don't have to trust your memory if you tell the truth.

You can use this idea two ways: (1) practice it yourself. (2) Persuade your interviewees it makes sense.

That is the philosophy every writer ought to be prepared to explain patiently and satisfactorily to the people his trade brings him in contact with. Reporters are not horrible ghouls seeking to destroy reputations of decent folk. At least the best of them do not practice their profession in this way. On the contrary, it fills their hearts with joy and a sense of significantly fulfilled professional pride, when they can help a person or institution to present its creative story effectively. They know it makes for better understanding and human relations. That is the essence of good feature writing. It is only when people try for devious reasons to hide the truth, or newspaper reporters (a tabloid seeking sensational treatment) try to pry behind the rightful bounds of individual privacy, that trouble and misunderstanding mushrooms.

You as a reporter will inevitably come to grips with both these factors. The crudity, the insolence of the ghoulish reporter will sometimes prevent the necessary performance of your duty to the public just as much, if not more than the studied reticence of that minority, who refuse to cooperate. You will be able to carry on, and quietly, politely, but steadfastly and unrelentingly push forward your search for the truth, if you have a philosophy and inner understanding of the great profession you pursue. All truth, unfortunately, is merely relative. We see what we want to see. So, honesty is your shield!

REWRITE

KEEP THE STORY ABOUT THE MC!

This is an old thought, but a necessary & important one that every writer should keep in mind. Does your MC solve his own problem at the climax of the story? I have read several stories recently in which the MC didn't choose the decisive action or carry through and dominate the action. The result is usually unsatisfactory to the reader.

One or more of a number of things can make the story fail to click. A common variation is that in which the author steps in with a surprise ending. Many writers like to dream up this kind of an ending because they feel it offers a novelty, something different. If you have not prepared the reader, however, a surprise is a jolt. It lacks the inevitable and inescapable punch of drama in real life. It seems merely like a trick that the author has slipped into the story by pulling the strings. The old Greek *deus ex machina* idea.

Good drama always has the ring of authentic action. Not only does the writer create the illusion of real life, but the characters seem to live the story by themselves and the author remains outside the circle. But this does not happen, the illusion is broken when an entirely new and unexpected premise is introduced late in the story. Prof. G. P. Baker in the old 47 Workshop used always to insist to us embryo playwrights, at Harvard, that always the basic premises are necessarily introduced by the first third of a story. After that no new conditions ought to be introduced, only unexpected, but very plausible developments of those already stated.

An author frequently gets into trouble because he has not studied his relationships. He does not actually change his conditions, in order to fool the reader with a "twist," he merely leaves some of them blank, or even worse, he ignores some of them, and goes off at a tangent. A good story is a very ingenious but nonetheless logical theorem. It develops step-by-step as relentlessly as one of those cash slips you bring home from the super-market. You can't believe the total—it must be wrong, you think. But when you go over it, item by item, you find it does add up. Each figure leads inevitably to the next until you arrive at the correct total or conclusion. There are no flaws. Everything beams on the single, swiftly flowing line of interest until you reach the only true end.

You can see, therefore, that it is not an MC going through the motions of working out his own problem, that satisfies the reader. His decision must proceed from plausible identification with the facts of the plot or situation, and also honest, lived up to characterization. As someone has said, a reader will give you a lot of freedom of choice in selecting your characters, the background & general situation. But then it's your mess!

DO YOU USE TOO MANY "HE SAID'S?"

One of the most noticeable differences between stories by professionals and those by inexperienced writers, is the number of "he said" speech tags. The professional's ms. is stripped and bare. The story gets on, the idea or editorial purpose of the story seems clear and usually ever present. There is an overall feeling of simplicity and strength.

The inexperienced writer's ms. by contrast is cluttered. He does not say it once & let it go at that. He repeatedly qualifies, and tries to get the exact, precise shading. The result is a ms. that seems wordy and, often, not clear. It is full of underbrush that is in need of clearing. The professional has a trick of making the overtones or extra values serve him well. It's the way he expresses an idea or thought, not the precise, studied wording, that makes it count. He is usually apt to be offhand, casual and personal whereas the inexperienced writer is labored and unsure of himself.

It is true that this kind of thing is developed by years or practice and some, perhaps a great deal of success. But more than you think, it comes from sheer hard work, an inner strength which derives from an exact, thorough knowledge of what one wants to say and the practiced ability to say it clearly and tersely, in as few words as possible.

You know, when you reduce it to the easiest terms, there are just three things that speech tags are intended to do, and—should do. (1) Advance the story; (2) make it clear who (which character) is talking; (3) add a heightened amount of color and emotion to a given speech. A fourth possibility actually comes under the first heading: increase the visual picture. The two characteristics are not completely synonymous, but near enough.

If a writer keeps these four jobs in mind all the time when he is writing dialogue, it is a good bet that his story-telling will improve 100% over the years. But here are some simple rules of thumb that will help a great deal:

- (1) Most writers overload their ms. They put too many stage directions, descriptions, stream-of-consciousness reflections, and author's narrative asides to the reader, into their ms. So the first rule is to cut, cut ruthlessly about 50% of this kind of thing.
- (2) Remember that the beginning and the end are points of emphasis. Don't waste them on colorless and perfunctory "he said's."
- (3) Remember, too, that you cannot heighten an emotion that is not basically built into a speech. The hero must use loving or "fond and endearing" words or it does no good for an author to insist that Ralph spoke fondly to his beloved. (The reader knows the score.)

REWRITE

(4) The most important thing in dialogue is "narrative flow". Each single speech should flow naturally out of the one preceding. It should lead equally naturally into the succeeding one that follows. The continuity is vitally important.

Actor knowledge of how each player cues the next, is something fiction writers need to learn and make an instinctive part of the experience they build up. Robert Frost once said that a story is a promise that continually leads a reader forward. The more that you invest your dialogue with this quality, so that the reader rushes forward, always & eagerly seeking the next response, the better you will help yourself.

Thus, if you break up a long block, and transform a monologue into dialogue, you've improved your ms. considerably. And if some action breaks up a single speech into several parts, be sure that each part carries the reader naturally forward to the next. Have you ever examined the couplings on a freight train? An unbroken line of hose carries the steam from boiler to caboose. That's the way good dialogue and action should be. A broken coupling lets the pressure diminish.

(5) There is a psychological connection between what you say and what you do. You may speak first, or you may be so surprised that you react dumbly first with your muscles. A good dialogue writer knows that his characters seem much more real if there is a natural chain of action and reaction continually going on in his scenes. One person stimulates another by what he says or does. The second person reacts, absorbs the stimulus and then responds. Thus he in turn stimulates & keeps the endless chain moving step by step until the scene is finished. And each scene leads inevitably to the next.

You will see from these few notes that in fiction you have an infinitely variable and much more complex form of story-telling than the stage, where there is only dialogue and action supplemented by pantomime and facial expression. Even the radio, tv and the movies with their physical flexibility are not now as highly developed arts.

The fiction writer has all the means that the live theater can muster, except light & color and the magic of the human voice. Compensating for these and the effect of crowd-psychology, he has the closer contact with a single reader, and all of the subsidiary effects obtainable with the use of narrative, description, reflection and drama visualized at second hand by an able story-teller, who appreciates his opportunity to "load" & editorialize subtly with action verbs, color-adjectives and adverbs, and sly innuendo. He heightens and plays up and down for the values he wishes to emphasize, as no other type of writer can. His only limitation is a sense of timing and understanding of his readers. He

must be able to develop these and have that instinctive flare for using all of his varied methods of projecting and communicating to the heart and mind of a reader.

NEWS TO INTEREST WRITERS

MS. LAB, The Writer's Workshop Magazine... Published by Margaret Howard, Box 242, GPO, NYC, made its appearance with a February issue. It had been announced six months ago under the probable title "Manuscript," but unfortunately that name was already in use. A prime purpose of this magazine is for readers to comment upon the 14 varied mss. that the authors have offered for criticism.

It might be possible to criticize the selection of mss. (they all offer opportunity for brief and constructive criticism.) But the basic purpose behind the publication of this magazine by Miss Howard and her husband who are printers, is entirely praiseworthy. Indeed, they seem dedicated persons because the Magazine carries no ads. and it is not intended to apparently. The editors have no axe to grind. Their sole aim seems to be to publish as much material as they can for the modest subscription price of \$3 per year. A writer does not even have to be a subscriber to get published or offer helpful criticism (a very praiseworthy angle.) I hope no writer will be motivated by vanity or over-ambitious competitiveness to try to take advantage of such an idealistic set-up. Writers have a fine opportunity to gain experience, practice and learn to write in such a magazine. Address as above for details.

10th Annual National Writing Contest, Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, 1020 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago 11, Ill. This year the details are housed in an attractive folder, distributed by Special Service, Dept of Medicine & Surgery, Veterans Administration... Washington 25, D. C. A worthy project these annual contests for soldier-writers confined in the VA hospitals. 21 different types of contests, plus four basic quarterly ones. A vast array of donated prizes, some of which are large. REWRITE happily awards three subscriptions in the contest for Hospital newspapers. Something we have done for a number of years.

Dr. Persia Campbell, Consumer Counsel for the Governor of New York, the Capitol, Albany, N. Y., has prepared a 58-page booklet for the use of community leaders and educators. The purpose is to make available to an increased number of people how "unwary & uninformed buyers are losing money every day, because they do not know what legal protection they have." This is a commendable project that should be followed in every state. State Senator Desmond has done much in N. Y. to afford citizens greater protection.

You can help by reporting rackets. REWRITE has exposed many preying on writers. Help us!

REWRITE

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Acceptances reported or seen by us:

Helen A. McCarthy

Book: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.

Shelton McKean

Articles: COLORADO WONDERLAND, K.C. STAR.
Jingles: Denver POST. Article: JOURNAL OF LIFETIME LIVING.

Harry S. Goodwin

Article: RURAL NEW YORKER.

Naomi Ingalls

Articles: POPULAR GARDENING, & NEW ENGLAND HOMESTEAD.

Grace Vreeland Rider

Play: PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

Jayne Deuel Darling

Article: GOOD BUSINESS.

Hazel Krueger

Story: The LOOKOUT.

H. Addington Bruce

Articles: YOUR LIFE, FATE, TOMORROW.

Dorothy Holman

Articles: MARKET GROWERS' JOURNAL & AM. AGRICULTURIST.

Helen Fletcher Collins

Articles: DESERT TRAILS, ARIZONA DAYS & WAYS, Music Studio NEWS.

Poems: ARIZONA HIGHWAYS, The Scottsdale ARIZONIAN.

Rebecca Phillips

Articles: WAR CRY, UPWARD, UN. BRETHREN, etc. (Rebecca is very modest. M.)

Helen Langworthy

Teen Story: TEEN TIME.

Articles: MONITOR, 'TEENS.

Kitty Parsons

Lecture: League of Am. Pen Women, Biennial Prize of \$50.

Poems: POETRY DIGEST, The Instructor.

Send in your notes of acceptances. They are good for your morale and reputation. And they help to chart the buying markets.

Mrs. Mary Lothrop. Too late for mention in the December issue, we learned of the death of Mary, an active poet, member of the Poetry Workshop and the WCS Family. Many of us will miss her cheery good humor.

Helen Fletcher Collins, former Arizona editor, has not only hit more than 100 newspapers with her publicity for the local chamber of commerce in Flagstaff, but is also freelancing. A difficult feat, as any experienced writer knows. (See: Batting Average Column.)

MARKETS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Lillian Stickney told us an anecdote that should give encouragement to many a discouraged free lance. About five years ago a friend told her about a contest being run by a magazine. She entered. Heard nothing. Gave it up for lost. The other day she received, no comment included, a check for \$10!

If you write long enough, you will get to expect a certain amount of "money from home" like this. Don't let it make you any less of a scrutinizer of rules, and less of a student of markets before you submit mas!

Marjorie McClelland Flint also reported a prize she won. This one was in a local contest. Sometimes these are easy pickings because the prizes may be substantial, yet few people hear about them. Bill once won a winter's supply of coal on a subject connected with scores of football teams he was totally ignorant of! He was lucky, but by studying the contest closely he was able to make his guess reasonably sensible.

The Village Pump, TRUE STORY, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17, which Mrs. Flint also hit, is a perennial short filler market that many WCS Family members have made "pot-boiler" money on from time to time. It takes human interest, problem solutions and reader opinions, the latter originally organized, on controversial subjects of current interest. It is necessary to be familiar with the column.

Caroline K. Allen has been using her specialized knowledge of botanical and nature items to read and edit mas. along these lines for publishers. Some of them have been published by the Macmillan Co. Carol, a former student and old friend of Bill & Elva, made the point in writing to us recently that in building its list "Macmillan leans over backward to publish material that is new, or is treated in an original manner." And, obviously, such a house checks carefully any ma with the help of experts. Carol was formerly on the staff of the Arnold Arboretum. In "Practical Gardening" by Olive M. Gunnison, you will also find her pen and ink sketches

Florence Plumstead gave us a warm plug recently for Helen Hull and Vera Bethel, editors of LIGHT & LIFE PRESS, Winona Lake, Ind. She sells junior and primary pieces to them. She reminded us "Helen Hull taught creative writing at Syracuse University. She always tells me why a piece fails to come up to the standard — and the standard is very high — and then gives me a chance to do it over again. Vera Bethel is young, but she is also fair and considerate. They want the best they can get, as all editors do, but they work hard to get it. And they appreciate it as few editors do. I think most editors are — pretty fine, if harried and exasperated, people usually." All of which is something writers don't often stop to think enough about. They should. It would make editors friendlier.

EMOTION IS ALL IMPORTANT

There is an old saying that to "touch another's heart you must use your own." This matter of getting emotion into a story is a very difficult one. And quite as difficult, I think, to talk practically about. It is a matter of one heart communicating to another. There are technical and intellectual aspects, but in the final analysis it is more nearly a question of the projection of emotion than anything. And that is difficult to express or project clearly. You either have a sense for it, which you cultivate. or you do not.

The first step of course is to have something to say. Not just a vague, general and intangible idea, but a specific and clearly visualized and visualizable idea. You must know exactly and precisely how both characters in a scene feel toward each other. Only the other day I revealed to a writer how little he really knew about the relations of his characters. I asked him a lot of difficult questions. He did not know the answers at all. Much of this information would not, probably, appear in the story. But the fact that he had thought about it and clarified, distilled it in his mind, would color & illuminate the narrative. And fill it with a variety of overtones, a flood of insinuating implications for the reader, which wouldn't otherwise be there.

A second step is to find words to express one's idea concretely, vividly and so visually that the reader can literally see, and feel the scene as if it were actually being lived in front of him. Or even better, were happening to him. The whole thing "comes alive" and creates a feeling of an illusion of reality that for a moment or two is stronger than life itself.

But words by themselves alone are not the answer. Here is where one heart must speak, sing the universal language of the emotions in terms another, every heart, can not only understand but take in eagerly. I have read lots of stories that repelled me because an author used words I knew were "right," but so purely intellectual they appealed only to my reason, not to my emotions. And a good story, like a strong rope is made of the 2 big strands that complement each other, emotion and intellect.

Many writers know the advice about action verbs in preference to passive or "telling" ones. But fewer are aware of the importance of warm, intimate, smooth-flowing words, the kind that radiate emotion. There are some of us who make a special study of the dictionary for that purpose; who read the works of other authors with an eager eye and ear for the well-used word. I even made lists, when I was learning to write fiction, words that had the authentic ring of emotion.

The amount of it is that you need to have

the imagination to use poetic, not flowery, words that carry the romance of living, and the tang of speech as it bubbles from ordinary folk. It is sometimes said a good writer must have a sensitive ear for dialogue. I think it is more a sympathy for what is the natural thing to say. I have always enjoyed listening to the special lingo of people in other lines and professions than my own. I have always been able to pick up occasional colorful phrases and use them the way their speakers did, but in new lines of thought. I have cultivated the trick of making such idiomatic use of language mean more than the original owners did, and thereby furnishing myself with a springboard for innumerable & varied kinds of feature articles. The danger is not to overdo or exaggerate a phrase and so dull its sharp cutting edge. Remember the play "Is zat so?" got twenty years, or more, ago? And how Damon Runyon made the commonplace slang of "guys and dolls" a part of the living American language? There are thousands of these nuggets lying about, and even the corny attempt of whistle-stop and/or swaggering big city sports to latch onto them and sound important or "wise," can be a gimmick. Listen and "bend" your own!

But in the last analysis it is not a good writer's task merely to record and dispense the eccentric or colorful phrase. He should be a good mimic, yes, but he must also penetrate the hearts and minds of his people. I have read thousands of mas. that were skilful transcriptions of daily life or history. But they seemed dry and lifeless. Two important principles control this matter of telling a story by tapping the rich folklore and flavor of people. You cannot just strip the surface off and expect it to have the deep, ingrained quality.

The first principle then, is to know your little world of illusion so well that it is practically your own. You must be able naturally and vividly to place your people and establish a plausible relationship with the time and place they occupy. You must know a hundred details of how they live and why. A file of information you do not distribute to readers solely through their minds, but also through their senses. Just as you enable them to hear sounds, smell odors and see an array of common or uncommon sights, so it's necessary, too, to reveal the interior verities of their moral, psychological & spiritual daily lives. Scads of this knowledge, with which you are so familiar, never finds its way into the actual wordage of the story itself. But because you have thought and pondered about it, it flavors your tale the way sugar and pepper do your lunch.

The second principle is that of projecting all of this so that it is not only clear to you, but also to the reader. And so that he like you tingles with the thrill of it. He feels it. This is something that it is almost impossible to teach. You have got to find the way to express it in words that sting hard.

REWRITE

A DISTINGUISHED ANNIVERSARY

The Catholic Poetry Society of America is completing its twenty-fifth year in 1956. At five year intervals it has held "Congresses of Poetry" in mid-spring. If one is held in 1956, it will be scheduled for autumn.

"Sealed Unto the Day," fourth anthology of poems from SPIRIT, the CPSA magazine, marks the twentieth year of publication. In January a sale of two-fifths of the limited edition had been reached. A pledge of 400 copies was asked for and 200 received. All but one of these pledges was redeemed. The lone cancellation came from a woman writer, "who had signed, was angered when her work was rejected afterwards, resigned from CPSA, & believed her resignation freed her from her original promise!" That greedy spirit of giving only to get, never makes editors admire your writing, or you as a person.

The address of SPIRIT is: Catholic Poetry Society of America, John Gilland Brunini, ed, 386 4th Ave., NYC 16. (A membership fee.)

THEY TRY TO WORK TOGETHER!

One of the nice things about the WCS Family is to see how many members are interested in the success of the others. And the way we often learn about what someone in Massachusetts is doing by hearing from a writer, let us say, in California or Texas. The editor of a small magazine remarked the other day that some writers are very amateurish & also exasperating. I replied that the human race is a wide cross-section and always full of surprises. Generally speaking, that portion of it making up the WCS Family usually turns out to be "fine folks". But even magazines like REWRITE are read by "strangers".

But this editor's comment points up a lesson that we try periodically to drive home. It takes only one spoiled apple to condemn a whole basket. Every writer should continually keep in mind that in more ways than one he always represents all writers when he sends a ms. into an editor's office. If he leaves a good impression behind him, all of us receive a warmer welcome when we follow him & vice versa. If he proves to be quarrelsome, and a poor loser, we get a harsher reception with possibly a quicker and less objective, more perfunctory rejection, if that is what is in the cards for us. So remember you are not alone when next you go to market.

MARKETS, NEWS, AND COMMENTS

New York State Fair Theater, Drummond Playwriting Contest, Goldwin Smith Hall 127, Ithaca, N. Y. This annual contest for serious or jolly one-act plays having a N. Y. State or rural or small town theme, is once again open. Prizes: \$75, \$50 and \$25. You can get a free copy of "A Playwright's Notebook" by writing to the above. Closes: June 30, 1956. Last year Mass. and Maine writers won two of the prizes.

Poetry Contest Chart, Stella Weston Tuttle, editor, Graylynn Hotel, Miami 3, Fla., semi-annually published, can be had on subscription, \$1 per year. Any such list is invaluable to writers. Saves time from digging.

The Asia Book Club, 119 W. 57th St., NYC, 19, started functioning in January.

The A. N. Marquis Co., 210 E. Ohio St., Chicago 11, Ill., plans to issue "The Blue Book of Awards". It will list over 2,500 prizes, that are offered annually in the U. S. & abroad.

Western Writers of America now publishes a supplement to its monthly The ROUNDUP, giving a "buyer's Guide of Western books". The voting represents the opinions of 20 critics whose papers and periodicals have a combined circulation of 7,158,554. The list is an interesting one for writers to study.

The WWA's Spur Awards Committee has done a solid and thoughtful piece of work in examining the potential values of these awards. For the 3rd annual competition the number of classes has been reduced. But with the exception of "Best Western Short Story," they are open to all writers. (This limitation is because of purely mechanical reasons.) Class 1 is for "Best Western Novel"; Class 2 for the "Best Western Non-Fiction" (book-length), & all classes are for the calendar year 1955. The Committee rightly feels that "best" really should mean best. So the prizes are open to all writers, not just members. Other organizations might well become equally tolerant and broad-minded! It would be good for their members and for Writing.

Incidentally, one can readily agree to the comment on The ROUNDUP by Steve Frazee, the WWA president in 1955. It is a fine example of good journalism, and, as result, good promotion. Best of all, it shows how a group of writers who are ordinary people, can work together for the common good even though they do not always agree on matters of policy. It could not happen anywhere in the Communist world, although that is what Communism literally means. Why not? Because the Communist Party substitutes force for democratic freedom of choice and the spirit of good will.

The Viking Press will start in March publication of a new paperback series: Compass Books. Object is to get the mass market for the quality paperbacks interested in special books that have appealed to a moderately large group of readers in the higher cost & hard cover field.

Goodwill Ambassadors. Various businessmen and organizations are beginning to see that America is being libeled and has few friends overseas. They have urged persons with relatives overseas to write letters about life in the United States. One of the most effective ambassadors is the writer who publishes honest, objective & warm feature articles.

As you may guess from this issue the past quarter has been a busy one. Bill has had a lot of mss. to read and two active classes. He had eleven students at Clark University in the fall term, and now there are eighteen in the spring semester. The majority of them are writing industriously. This has meant reading, much of it during the week. And he was asked once more to gather a staff of writers and editors for the Clark Conference. Also, he's felt the need to do some outside writing himself. So in spare moments he has written a number of articles and some fillers. For the most part warm up stuff to get his hand in again after a long holiday. Publication? Shorts in the C. S. MONITOR to date, with a satisfying number of others in other periodicals scheduled.

Elva has been very busy with her Poetry Programs and writing some verse herself. During the winter we've had quite a number of visiting writers and others for personal conferences. Elva has kept a supervising eye out for painters who shined up our inside woodwork, and Gramps and Billy, who have labored diligently building bookcases. Outside, Billy is building his most elaborate structure, a two-story clubhouse. Which proves that spring cannot be far away. Earlier, he and Bill enjoyed hugely the long skating season and followed this with work on the stamp collection that Billy has started, a good one.

THE WCS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

During the past year the WCS Scholarship Fund received from 14 persons a total of \$31.50 & aided 16 writers. Several beneficiaries repaid a portion and so shared in helping widen the circle of friendship. In addition, REWRITE, as has been its policy for many years, gave free subscriptions as prizes for worthwhile competitions sponsored by writers' clubs and the Hospitalized Veterans' Writers' Project. For a magazine that accepts no advertising, as a matter of policy, we try to do all that we can to help writers.

For the benefit of new subscribers may we explain that we accept no advertising so we report both the writing and selling sides of your profession without bias. Over the years our frank reports on some of the very questionable advertising that circulates in some writers' magazines and other magazines, too, have saved writers hundreds of dollars annually. Our only interest is always that what is best for writers shall be made available to them honestly and above board.

Meredith's Strength And Weakness

GEORGE MEREDITH is an extremely faulty story-teller and yet contrives to enlarge the whole scope of the art. The bulk of his characters, that is practically all the secondary figures, are not created nor even constructed; they are mere names and dialogue and nothing more, without any hold upon our imagination; and yet he who has given us so many of these creatures of straw has also given us some of the greatest figures in fiction, some heroines inferior to none but Shakespeare's.

His style is such that it cannot always cope with the expository and other matter that forms the ground level of fiction, the kind of matter that presents no difficulty to the ordinary novelist; and yet it shows itself capable of handling the heightened moments, the great scenes, in a fashion that lifts such passages far beyond the reach of any but the great masters of the Novel.

It is this odd combination of weakness and strength that makes Meredith a unique figure in the history of English fiction. He is like a man who cannot pass the salt without spilling it and yet is able to juggle with six plates and the whole crust.—From "George Meredith," by J. B. PRIESTLEY, 1926. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

The box on this page expresses eloquently one of the paradoxes that continually makes inexperienced writers wonder why they can't get published. Meredith was a valued writer in the days of my parents' youth. He was a thoughtful writer and in many ways a craftsman despite his obvious limitations. But he illustrates the all too frequent complicating opposition of values we see today. The writers with little to say, but a flare for dramatic scenes and theatrically effective, skilful presentation. The men and women who have much to say, but express it in awkward and often slovenly English. The writers who are borderline cases, able to cross lines & write one memorable novel, or semi-occasionally write a fairly good piece.

I do not need to name names. It would only hurt literary reputations and do little good. I believe though, that you readers, if you think about classic masterpieces and bestseller rockets that shoot across some year's sky, and are forgotten, often ridiculed the next year, you will know I am talking the same language as Mr. Priestley.

The important thing is to be able to apply this lesson to—one's self. Elva and I discussed this matter at lunch recently. We agreed that you have got to be able to sell your wares. And have confidence in your ability to write. She told an amusing anecdote about her family labelling her as a bold egotist because she told an employer who was thinking of hiring her, how good she was. But the point was that from previous business experience she had learned this was the truth. She was bold, but only in giving a good, self-confident presentation and a factual analysis that any practical businessman could recognize as one that he could check...Editors are seldom fooled. They know if you are selling them an empty, though attractively packaged box of "air".

Today, we had a letter from a writer, who is trying to sell himself way out beyond his depth. You can admire his courage in showing his goods now to the top editors, and trying to compete with experienced professionals & expert craftsmen. But even a rank amateur if he were to glance at this chap's mss., would recognize it for what it is—second rate. He's fooling no one but himself.

That's why it is so important to read, to have a sense of style, an awareness of competence, and not be fooled by back-patters. To measure yourself by a variety of markets.

REWRITE

NEW BOOKS FOR WRITERS

PRIZE STORIES, 1956. Ed. Paul Engle & Hansford. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95. This is the 36th volume in the O. Henry Awards series. There have been many changes in the selection and editing. The present editors have gone more liberally to the popular magazines, the college magazines, and the unusual smaller magazines. Their appraisal is more nearly that of a complete cross-section rather than the literary magazines alone. Generally speaking this represents a popularization of taste & a salutary thing for the short story. Both experienced and new, unknown writers are included. And that, too, is good so long as a standard in taste and craftsmanship is maintained at a high level. Read and decide.

THORNDIKE BARNHART CONCISE DICTIONARY. Ed. Clarence L. Barnhart. Doubleday & Co. \$2.00. A new, inexpensive dictionary with 70,000 entries. Supplemented by its introductory editorial guides, this medium-sized dictionary is satisfactory for most workaday needs. For unusual words and the deeper definitions or overtones, you will need a larger book.

AIRCRAFT IN DISTRESS. Harley D. Kysar. Chilton Co. \$6.00. This is the kind of new manual our scientific age is requiring continually to be written. It is written both for operations personnel and passengers. So it is an invaluable reference book for writers of fact and fiction dealing with flying.

THE WRITER OBSERVED. Harvey Breit. The World Publishing Co. \$3.75. These are some 60 pen-pictures of writers whom Mr. Breit, a skillful practitioner, has interviewed for the N. Y. TIMES. Not all are equally good. But try reading those about Robert Frost, Noel Coward and Albert Schweitzer. You will get the difference between what he likes and doesn't like so well. A valuable little book.

WORLD BOOK OF GREAT SCIENTIFIC INVENTIONS.. Jerome S. Meyer. The World Publishing Co. \$3.95. This is a leisurely, though tightly-written book. It really is a fascinating account of the development of man's mind, and culture. A very useful reference book.

HOW TO WRITE A STORY AND SELL IT. Adela Rogers St. John. Doubleday & Co. In spite of the title, this is not so much a "how to" book as a thin but practical volume of inspiration, experience and easy reading about the many, many professional writers the author knows, together with magical anecdotes about their experience. A valuable book worth the \$2.95 price.

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF THEODORE DREISER, Introduction by James T. Farrell. The World Publishing Co. \$3.00. It is good to have an anthology of this type available. Dreiser was an important influence on American fiction. Yet only a few of these stories today are familiar to present day readers.

OTHER WORTHWHILE BOOKS

BEN FRANKLIN. Nelson Beecher Keyes. Hanover House. \$2.95. Labelled "an affectionate biography, this is a familiar and leisurely, a background sort of book, that makes readers feel they know the era in which Franklin is an important and energetic man of many gifts

THEATRICAL COMPANION TO MAUGHAM. Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson. The Macmillan Co. \$8.50. Any record of Maugham's thirty-odd plays and the half-dozen more by other writers adapting some of his stories, is welcome. But this otherwise thorough book, an importation from England, is marred by some very bad reproduction of photographs that in many cases were not too good to begin with. The difference between American and English reproduction, even when the printing plates are all English, offers a very invidious comparison.

GIFTED CHILDREN. The Cleveland Story. Theodore Hall. The World Publishing Co. \$2.00.. This is the story of what has been done for the high IQ child over a period of 30 years to keep him from being held back by average students in public schools. An exciting and provocative book. Other communities can and should benefit from studying it.

DO YOU READ ENOUGH GOOD BOOKS?

One of the surprising facts that shows up at writers' conferences and in many classes in creative writing, is the deplorable lack of good reading done by many writers. It is almost a truism that the great majority, at least among inexperienced would-be writers, of those who hope to become salable authors have read very little and not widely. Mrs. St. Johns comments upon this in her book. In one chapter she lists the books she carries everywhere with her, and considers essential. It is a remarkable list.

I am not one of those who believe that the writer should be judged by the books he has read. A member of writers' conference staffs for 20 years, I have run into an amazing amount of literary snobbery. The opinion, it seems, of some staff members and "conference" is that if you haven't read Faulkner & Hemingway, Joyce and a lot more, you are beyond the pale, you can't possibly have any style. The important thing, of course, is not whether you can quote casually, or say, "I loved Hemingway's diminishing objective style," but whether you have something important to say about life and the world you live in.

The reason you read is to learn the difference between weak, formless writing & good, strong prose or fiction. The difference between what the great minds of the past have said, and what you feel you must say. It is said we climb and mature over our dead, and cast off tastes. How can we have much to say if we have never reached out beyond our own thoughts, or shaped our minds and emotions?

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

One of the most important factors in fiction writing is the matter of relationships between the characters in your story. These are the real source of your plot. It grows out of them whether you are aware of it, or not. And much of your characterization must inevitably stem from your understanding and handling of the relationships. Finally, no little of the color and style of the actual ms. itself derives from the way you balance one character against another, and use contrasting shades and tones from a richly varied palette.

The basic difficulty of many writers I've discovered comes from the fact that they become so interested in their main character, they forget to pay sufficient attention to, or properly develop, the other characters. A lopsided tendency thus develops. The relationships become simply one-way affairs instead of two-way affairs. The secret of the successful story is that it involves the MC with other characters. And the very essence of involvement is that both sides become involved.

What this really means is that an author, if he is to do a complete job, must be able to see all sides of the predicament. His principle task is to make the reader feel as if he were the MC. We want to experience a problem as if it were our own. But fully to get the thrill, we must be able to understand & accept as convincing the motives of each of the other or surrounding characters. And this is true even when one of these is a heel or an outright villain.

You see, the story-teller in his god-like position must keep out of the story, yet see all and know all. He must be so adaptable he can reach into the heart and mind of each & every character. This means he must be able to follow at least passively every relationship in both directions, not just one, that of the MC. This of course is a vastly more complex sociological matter than just being aware of the complicated life of one character.

I find again and again in working with an author that his troubles arise from lack of knowledge of his characters. He simply does not know enough about them. Oh, yes, one of them is a blonde, another dark-haired, etc. External, yes. But it is necessary to know what makes them tick inside. Details of characterization, how they live and feel & why. How they do a lot of unimportant things on a day-to-day basis. Why they hate their father and adore their mother, or vice versa. In other words, a whole lot about their heredity, environment and complex relationships. Much of this information does not ever actually appear in the final ms. But it colors, warms and adds texture to your telling of it. It lends authority and deepens the texture.

THE FICTION WORKSHOP

Last issue the Fiction Workshop got crowded out, an unavoidable omission I regret. I will use some of the mss. that were submitted at that time for discussion now. You can learn much from the weaknesses I will highlight, because they are universal defects. I find them in the mss. turned in in my class at Clark University and in the mss. we read here at WCS House. It is not easy to get an intimate, apparently casual and competently controlled style that withstand scrutiny. It comes only through continued practice.

Margaret Concession turned in an interesting ms. I told her that one reason a magazine editor probably refused it was that it had a too familiar plot and one of the "gimmicks" related to this was duplicated, something that further weakens any plot. Incidentally, in her new book, "How to Write a Story and Sell It," Adela Rogers St. Johns, a long time professional, tells how one author sniffed at a trite plot, while another grabbed it, freshened it, and sold it!

Mrs. R. C. Hammond also entered a rejected ms. Her rejection factors were also common ones. In trying for brevity she missed feeling for drama and motivation. She didn't make it seem real enough. The idea was good but using generalities instead of anecdotes, she did not give it the ring of reality. It needed documentation, the "I know that background" feeling that an experienced craftsman can give even if he doesn't.

Joe Tweton brought out the problem of the viewpoint in a story and keeping the author out of a story. If he uses a semi-omniscient viewpoint, the line is often thin between a writer staying out and intruding. Many professional authors slip up on this. Usually, the trouble arises when an author lets the MC reflect or think. The trick is to phrase this material as the MC would think it, and say it to herself. And also to emotionalize it. In other words, if you don't let the MC merely summarize important premises & speak loud enough so the reader can hear. Dramatize the inner thought and feelings of your character. Subtly and not too literally let her mind and heart clash in a conflict. It becomes instead of a convenient inner monologue, a scene between two sides of one MC. Let her talk to herself, as many of us do—but do it naturally. A very hard thing to explain on paper! You have to find an effective illustration and place it beside a poor one. Even then the distinction is not easily grasped, or "seen".

Sue Magee sent a ms. that she hoped might match an editor's special requirements. The answer to that of course is to study sample copies of the material you wish to duplicate as closely as possible in your own original way. I told Sue I thought her ms. was a bit too high pitched, an easy "miss" to make.

REWRITE

Mary A. Fallon commenting that her workshop entry was a first serious attempt at a story, nevertheless sent in what I termed a potentially salable story. It was a juvenile and the plot a fairly familiar one. That is not necessarily a rejection factor. If the author gives it an original setting and does it in a competent manner, that may well help it. A practically new cross-section of readers is available every few years. So if a story idea is not used within the space of perhaps five years, it will be new to almost all of the readers of any given magazine, or even a majority of those who read several papers.

The factors that did weaken Mary's story, I think were less obvious. The choice of animals in a juvenile is always important. I remember one editor saying she did wish the authors sending her stories could find some other pet beside a cat or dog. Of wild animals one must be careful. A wolf obviously, has overtones given it by "Little Red Riding Hood." Bears are better because although an expert in natural history might not recommend them, to a child's mind they suggest the cuddly teddy bear. Elephants bring overtone values stirred up by the circus, while monkeys, lions and other such wild animals require a certain unrealistic cute or humorous background, the introduction of absurdities or whimsy. Perhaps you see that selecting a pet or just an animal is fraught with problems and free associations of the child and his parent, who probably buys the book. So it is serious business, and hangs on a mood you may give to the story.

Another factor in Mary's story was that of the cast of human characters. There were two grown-ups and only one little boy. It is always better to have more children than older people, and to keep the latter minor. Let the children be important, and work a problem out in terms of the child's experience. If animals are used, the child thinks about them in his own terms. That's why most animals, like Peter Rabbit, are "children." A child can identify himself with them and he can see that they face the same necessities for discipline, a supervised existence. But please don't over-emphasize by too pat, neat application the lessons of life and "right" decisions. Let the wonderful world of nature be natural. Build a love of nature and respect for its immutable laws. Show the sense behind it, the mystery of its perfect planning, not just the dictatorial wisdom of doing what mama says, because mama knows best and don't bother to wonder why or ask questions.

One very useful device in children's stories is to have a small MC supported by another little boy or girl. There are practical reasons for this. If you have both boys and girls, both are more likely to read the story. And having a confidant for the MC is a fine way to make it easier to tell a story. There can be disagreements and so on

conflict scene when you need to bring out some important premises or explanation. It's lots more interesting if we readers can overhear natural dialogue and see unconscious action not intended for listening ears and eyes.

There are also the angles that perhaps the neighbor child might be able to go to a circus and Jody cannot. Or that the other little boy would be left behind. This raises a problem that gives the reader an unconscious lesson in being unselfish, and lets the hero make a right decision. It also builds a step in your plot unobtrusively.

Well, this is our Workshop for this time. Next time. Send in your problem ms. & questions before May 1st. I will discuss them & try to help you. Remember this is a practical Workshop for Fiction and Non-Fiction authors. It costs nothing but your time & interest to reap the benefit. I hope more folk will take part.

Remember: Deadline: May 1st.

SOME LAST MINUTE NEWS

A card from Julie Batchelor reporting her acceptance by Harcourt, Brace & Co. of a new juvenile, "Golden Lady," for the fall list! It is her third children's book. It's a fine story. Elva and I have read it in ms. Billy likes her stories.

Doris Ricker Marston had a two-column feature article about Francis Scott Key on the C. S. MONITOR editorial page on March 3rd. A by-product of her historical research, when she wrote her first juvenile serial.

TOWN JOURNAL, Town Name Editor, Washington 4, D. C., pays \$25 for a filler feature about an interesting town name. Include a snapshot of highway sign. They used one for the February issue.

A writer's club with an unusual name: The Maine-U-Scripters. It's a small group which meets at various members' houses in & near-by Portland. Mrs. Louise Jenney, one of the Maine Writers' Conference group leads it.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION & UNUSUAL SERVICES Ed. Raphael Alexander. Informational Directory Co. #2. (1956/7, 4th Edition.) By no means complete, but an alphabetical listing of many and widely diversified sources that writers might find difficulty in thinking about if in a hurry. Good to have available.

The NEW ENGLAND HOME, Leon H. Ballou, Jr., 25 Huntington Ave., Boston 16, Mass., became a bi-monthly instead of quarterly, to start its 3rd volume. Justine Flint Georges, former editor of N. H. PROFILES, has joined the staff & so has Sargent Collier. A page of poetry has been added. And other features. It carries some good feature articles. It is a worthy competitor to other New England maga-

CRAFTSMANSHIP MAKES YOU FREE!

Periodically we try to list some of those obvious faults that lead to inevitable rejection by an editor. Bill is a firm and strenuous believer in the theory that if a writer eliminates all the possible rejection factors he can spot, his chances of acceptance are much stronger. Too many of us whip out a ms. from the typewriter and send it out in a burst of enthusiasm. If we would take time to study the market and compare our ms. to the obvious limitations perceptible after a casual reading of several issues, we would increase our chances of a sale 50% at least.

One big rejection factor is the matter of a single line of interest. Many of the mss. we read have more than one potential story concealed in them. There is not one unified plot. There are several tangential ideas that are just strong enough to distract the reader's mind from the single one that the author had intended to put over.

Often this weakness develops because the writer shifts his viewpoint or lets two or more characters appear to be the MC. It is like letting a spectator view a work of art from two angles at the same time. If we saw that in a painting there seemed to be more than the three dimensions we can habitually see in real life, we would recognize obvious distortion. But a writer often permits a reader to see several facets of a story, i. e., to view it from several directions, all at the same time. If you did this with a camera, you would have a double negative or a blurred picture.

Unity of impression and singleness in an author's purpose are not merely mean rules that some teacher dreamed up. They are the practical results of readers demanding the story be over-simplified so that there will be one unified effect. Many of us try to listen to a radio, watch a baseball game, and discuss both programs at the same time with a companion. But we would get more real enjoyment from doing only one thing at a time and doing it well. For his own self-protection a writer must do only one thing, & do it clearly and forcefully. Otherwise, readers will not stay with him.

At the risk of pounding this theory home too hard, let me remind you that in a theater only one character speaks or moves at one time. Except for a special dramatic effect, this rule is seldom violated. Even the eye-lines formed by the positioning of the players, are focussed on a single person so as to emphasize and heighten action and dialogue. The spectator is literally, and forcefully urged to see and hear but a single thing. Speeches are so written that only one idea is conveyed at a time. Often the step-step-step march of dramatic action is spelled out in this way so that a reader cannot miss it if he wants to.

You may say that this makes for artificiality, and that real life was never so lived by human beings. No one in his right mind ever said that the theater, or any medium of story-telling was not artificial. It is! The illusion of reality, not the exact reproduction of life, is what we seek to achieve. A story is a blend of technique and tricks and skill that deceives the human eye and heart into accepting a set of symbols. But at its best a story seems so real it makes hardened readers laugh and cry. They not only believe the little corner of life is being lived in front of them, they know for the time the story lasts, that they are up on the imaginary stage, living it themselves. They are the MC, being crushed or triumphing over obstacles just as he is.

There are two types of audiences, readers who react to a background because it is just like their own small environment. And there are others, more adventurous, who react to a far place that's made compellingly vivid. It takes all kinds to make a world. But both of these types are united in wishing to be moved emotionally as well as intellectually. A reader wants to identify himself with a story, but also to enjoy his front seat at an exciting dramatic spectacle. It may be a part of our primeval heritage, but we thrill over the sight of an airplane crashing, a person burning to death, or a crook being cornered in a courtroom trial and forced to use every expedient to outwit Society.

That's why there must be a single issue, and why there must be a single protagonist. One line of interest upon which everything in a story bears, with noose threads or tangential side issues. There has been a tendency of late to disparage form in stories. Men and women returning from the wars with realistic ideas, have not wanted to be bound down. But fiction began to be less popular because it had to compete against the incredible true-life experiences of wartime living. And because two types of fiction writers lacked a strong faith in the eternal fundamentals of good story-telling. Those with the realistic ideas too often lacked craftsmanship, while the professional story-tellers, grown tired and bewildered by the terrific drama of real life, let their craftsmanship drag and their hackneyed tricks show.

It is a fact that great story-telling has always followed the rules, but in its zest, its vital and vigorous fertility it has seemed to sweep away and transcend the rules. It takes a great genius to make the illusion of reality seem more casual and more real than life itself. But that is where craftsmanship and being full of one's subject come in. In real life there are many cross-currents. The lines of interest of a dozen stories are intertwined. But in a story the author has to select, eliminate, concentrate and intensify. With the skill and imagination of art he make the reader forget everything but the story.